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Health Issues Report 1999

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City of Hamilton
&
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Hamilton-Wentworth



Social & Public Health Services Division

A Teaching Health Unit affiliated with
McMaster University, the University of Guelph and
the Ontario Public Health Research, Education
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Table of Contents

| | Page |
|--|------|
| Table of Contents..... | i |
| Report Highlights..... | 1 |
| Introduction..... | 2 |
| Population Characteristics | 3 |
| Poverty | 4 |
| Health Status | 5 |
| Health and Well-Being of Children and Youth | 6 |
| Air, Water and Food Quality | 7 |
| Health Behaviour | |
| Tobacco and Alcohol Use..... | 8 |
| Healthy Weight, Physical Activity and Healthy Eating | 9 |
| Sexual Health..... | 10 |
| Health Outcomes | |
| Heart Disease | 11 |
| Cancer | 12 |
| Injuries | 13 |
| Reproductive Outcomes..... | 14 |
| Infectious Diseases | 15 |
| Map of Hamilton-Wentworth within Central West Ontario..... | 16 |

List of Tables

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Table 1 Number of people living with self-reported physical or mental limitations, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1996/97 | 5 |
| Table 2 Number of days spent in hospital by discharge diagnosis, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1997 | 5 |
| Table 3 Cancer, cardiovascular and respiratory disease mortality rates, Hamilton-Wentworth and Canada, 1996 | 5 |
| Table 4 Average weekly cost of a nutritious food basket for specific individuals and families, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1999..... | 9 |

List of Figures

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Figure 1 Age and sex population pyramid, Hamilton-Wentworth 1996 and 2021 projections..... | 3 |
| Figure 2 Percentage of total population, economic families and unattached individuals living below the low-income cut-off, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1986 - 1996 | 4 |
| Figure 3 Percentage of people age 12 years and over with self-reported depression and who felt depressed by sex, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1996/97 | 5 |



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List of Figures (continued)

| | Page |
|-----------|---|
| Figure 4 | Percentage of primary school children with one or more cavities and one or more serious untreated dental problems by school dental health status, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1998/99.....6 |
| Figure 5 | Number of confirmed cases of enteric illness by month, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1997/98 season7 |
| Figure 6 | Percentage of people aged 15 years and over who reported being current daily or occasional smokers by age group and sex, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1996/978 |
| Figure 7 | Percentage of people aged 20 years and over who reported being active, moderately active or inactive by sex, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1996/979 |
| Figure 8 | Pregnancy rate per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19 years, Hamilton-Wentworth and Ontario, 1989-199510 |
| Figure 9 | Age-standardized mortality rates for heart disease and stroke, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1981-1996.....11 |
| Figure 10 | Age-standardized incidence rates for selected cancer sites by sex, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1980-1995.....12 |
| Figure 11 | Age and sex specific mortality rates due to motor vehicle collisions by age group and sex, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1994-1996.....13 |
| Figure 12 | Rate of hospital separations due to motor vehicle collisions, suicide attempts and falls, Hamilton-Wentworth and Central West Ontario, 1997.....13 |
| Figure 13 | Rate of low birth weight babies (less than 2,500 grams) per 1,000 live births by age of mother, Hamilton-Wentworth and Central West Ontario, 199614 |
| Figure 14 | Number of confirmed influenza cases by month, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1996/97-1998/99 seasons.....15 |

Highlights from the Hamilton-Wentworth Health Issues Report, 1999

- ★ Between 1996 and 2021, Hamilton-Wentworth's population is projected to increase by 23% (from 467,799 to 575,825). The percentage of the population that is 65 years and over is projected to increase by 57% (from 66,325 to 104,060) with people aged 85 years and over the fastest growing group (131% increase).
- ★ From 1986 to 1996, poverty rates in Hamilton-Wentworth increased among the total population (from 18% to 22%), economic families (from 14% to 19%) and unattached individuals (from 43% to 48%).
- ★ In Hamilton-Wentworth, 12% of children in primary school were found to have serious untreated dental problems in 1998/99. Schools whose students had the most serious dental problems were in lower-income areas.
- ★ In 1996, the Hamilton area recorded 559 hours of poor air quality. This was lower than the number of poor air quality days recorded in other areas including Windsor, London, Sarnia and Burlington. However, it is estimated that every year there are 90 premature deaths and 300 hospital admissions in Hamilton-Wentworth linked to poor air quality.
- ★ In Hamilton-Wentworth, 32% of youth aged 15 to 24 years reported being daily or occasional smokers compared to 28% in Ontario overall in 1996/97. This is a concern because research shows that youth smokers often continue to smoke as adults.
- ★ Physical inactivity is a risk factor for heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and some cancers. In Hamilton-Wentworth, 51% of males and 62% of females aged 20 years and over reported being inactive in 1996/97.
- ★ Teen pregnancy rates increased in Hamilton-Wentworth from 43 pregnancies per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19 years in 1989 to 51 pregnancies per 1,000 females in 1995.
- ★ Cardiovascular disease (73,830 days) and injuries and poisonings (37,267 days) accounted for the two largest number of days spent in hospital by Hamilton-Wentworth residents in 1997.
- ★ Heart disease remains the number one killer of both males and females in Hamilton-Wentworth. However, heart disease death rates in Hamilton-Wentworth have been declining since 1981.
- ★ Lung cancer recently joined breast cancer as a leading cause of cancer death among Hamilton-Wentworth females. The increase in female lung cancer incidence and deaths reflects the higher level of female smokers in the 1960's and 1970's compared to the previous two decades.
- ★ In 1996, deaths due to injury (204) among Hamilton-Wentworth people of all ages were caused most often by falls (32%), suicide (21%) and motor vehicle collisions (12%).
- ★ In Hamilton-Wentworth, the low birth weight baby rate was highest among females aged 20 to 24 years, followed by females aged 15 to 19 years and 35 to 39 years, and lowest among females aged 25 to 34 years in 1996.
- ★ In Hamilton-Wentworth, 2,147 confirmed cases of reportable infectious disease were recorded in 1998, down 3% from the 2,210 cases in 1997.

Introduction

Objectives

The objectives of the Health Issues Report are to:

1. Provide local councillors, health and social service planners and providers, educators, and students in Hamilton-Wentworth with up-to-date community health information in keeping with the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.
2. Facilitate the communication of community reports and studies on health topics relevant to the citizens of Hamilton-Wentworth, and;
3. Provide highlights of health issues in Hamilton-Wentworth using existing community health information.

Vision 2020: Sustainable Community

The Health Issues Report provides information and data on the health and well-being of our local community. In doing so, this report complements the Vision 2020 Sustainable Community Indicators initiative in providing City/Regional decision-makers with information relevant to the sustainable community principles.

Hamilton-Wentworth and Central West Ontario

The Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth is made up of six area municipalities:

- Township of Glanbrook
- Town of Flamborough
- Town of Dundas
- Town of Ancaster
- City of Hamilton
- City of Stoney Creek

Hamilton-Wentworth is one of seven public health units in Central West Ontario. The other six public health units are:

- Brant
- Haldimand-Norfolk
- Halton
- Niagara
- Waterloo
- Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph
(see map on page 16).

Sources of Data and Information

The most up-to-date data available were used in this report. Data availability, however, varied by source resulting in data from 1995 up to 1999. Where possible, comparisons were made across time and across jurisdictions.

Multiple data sources were used in this report including:

- Social and Public Health Services Division program data (for example, Reportable Disease Information System [RDIS], Immunization Record Information System [IRIS]), and Dental Indices Survey) and PHRED Effective Public Health Practice Project systematic overviews
- Ontario Health Survey (Ontario Ministry of Health)
- Census Canada (Statistics Canada)
- Health Planning System [HELPS] (Ontario Ministry of Health)
- Provincial Health Planning Database (Ontario Ministry of Health)
- Ontario Provincial Report on Achievement: Assessment Results: Grade 3 Reading (Education Quality and Assessment Office).

Many local agencies, organizations and projects contributed valuable data and information to this report including:

- Central West Health Planning Information Network
- "Keeping Score" on Kids in Hamilton-Wentworth, Canadian Centre for Studies of Children at Risk
- Children's Aid Society
- Catholic Children's Aid Society
- Hamilton Air Quality Initiative
- Infection Control Services of Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation and St. Joseph's Hospital.

Additional information on health issues in Hamilton-Wentworth can be found in *Infobook: Infowatch Series: Community Health Newsletter*. A complete list of data and information sources is available through the Social and Public Health Services Division.

Population Characteristics for Hamilton-Wentworth, 1996

Land Area in Square Kilometers:

1,113



Population by Municipality:

| | |
|--------------|---------|
| Ancaster | 23,403 |
| Dundas | 23,125 |
| Flamborough | 34,037 |
| Glanbrook | 10,564 |
| Hamilton | 322,352 |
| Stoney Creek | 54,318 |

| | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Hamilton-Wentworth 1991 | 451,665 |
| Hamilton-Wentworth 1996 | 467,799 |
| Hamilton-Wentworth 2021* | 575,825 |
| Percent change 1991-1996 | +3.6 |
| Percent change 1996-2021 | +23.1 |

Population by Marital Status*:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Never married | 107,755 |
| Legally married 200,550 | |
| Separated but still legally married | 11,705 |
| Divorced | 26,835 |
| Widowed | 27,460 |

Family Structure:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Total number of families | 127,960 |
| Male lone parent families | 2,965 |
| Female lone parent families | 16,755 |

Population by Literacy Level*:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Great difficulty reading | 27% |
| Read but not well | 33% |
| Basic skill level | 30% |
| High level of literacy | 10% |

Population by Mother Tongue:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| English | 349,460 |
| French | 6,265 |
| Official languages total: | 355,725 |
| Italian | 21,505 |
| Polish | 9,135 |
| Portuguese | 7,360 |
| German | 6,530 |
| Croatian | 5,575 |
| Chinese | 4,870 |
| Spanish | 4,005 |
| Dutch | 3,915 |
| Serbian | 3,625 |
| Hungarian | 3,175 |
| Ukrainian | 3,110 |
| All others | 27,525 |
| Non-official languages total: | 100,330 |

Occupied Private Dwellings:

| | |
|---------------|---------|
| Own dwelling | 112,190 |
| Rent dwelling | 66,230 |

Citizenship Status of Population:

| | |
|----------------------|---------|
| Canadian citizenship | 436,415 |
| Other than Canadian | 26,140 |

Population by Highest Level of Schooling*:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Less than grade 9 | 42,625 |
| Grades 9 to 13 | 145,190 |
| Trades certificate or diploma | 14,655 |
| Other non-university training | 94,345 |
| Without certificate/diploma | 25,460 |
| With certificate/diploma | 68,885 |
| University | 72,295 |
| Without degree | 29,520 |
| With certificate/diploma | 15,120 |
| Bachelor's degree or higher | 14,400 |
| | 42,770 |

Population by Total Household Income:

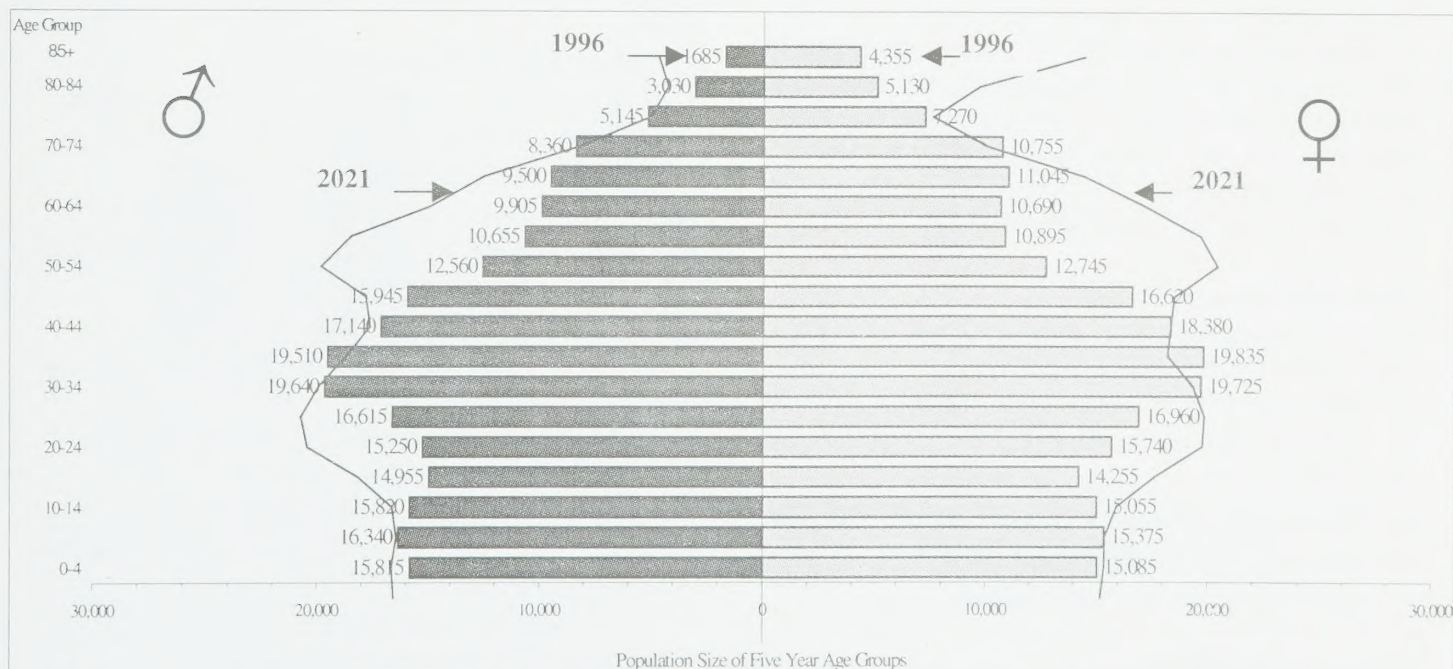
| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| Under \$10,000 | 12,735 |
| \$10,000 - \$19,999 | 29,990 |
| \$20,000 - \$29,999 | 23,340 |
| \$30,000 - \$39,999 | 20,435 |
| \$40,000 - \$49,999 | 18,615 |
| \$50,000 - \$59,999 | 17,885 |
| \$60,000 - \$69,999 | 14,270 |
| \$70,000 and over | 41,140 |

Population of Never-Married Sons and/or Daughters Living at Home:

| | |
|---------------------------|--------|
| Under 6 years of age | 36,350 |
| 6 - 14 years of age | 55,575 |
| 15 - 17 years of age | 16,395 |
| 18 - 24 years of age | 29,165 |
| 25 years of age and older | 15,435 |

*15 years of age and older. ^Based on City/Region population projections [unofficial], 1999.
Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census. ^Statistics Canada, International Adult Literacy Survey, 1994.

Figure 1. Age and Sex Population Pyramid, Hamilton-Wentworth 1996 and 2021 Projections



Source: 1996 Census & City of Hamilton / Region of Hamilton-Wentworth Official Plan Projections [unofficial], 1999.

Poverty in Hamilton-Wentworth

The CCSD Urban Poverty Project: In 1996, the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) engaged municipalities throughout Canada, including the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth, in a study of urban poverty based on 1991 and 1996 Census data. A City/Region working group created a preliminary description of poverty in Hamilton-Wentworth in a report entitled *The Urbanization of Poverty in Hamilton-Wentworth*. Portions of this report are summarized below.

Definitions

LICO: The Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-Off, or LICO, is used in the CCSD Urban Poverty Project to define poverty. LICOs represent levels of before tax income where individuals and families spend approximately 50% of their income on food, shelter and clothing. LICOs vary according to the size of family unit and the population size of the area of residence.

Economic Family: Refers to a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption.

Unattached Individual: Refers to an individual who is not a member of an economic family, who is 15 years of age and over and either lives alone or in a household where he/she is not related to any other member of that household.

Urban Poverty

A disproportionate number of poor people live in the City of Hamilton compared to the other five regional municipalities. For example, in 1996, Hamilton was the place of residence for 67% of the total Hamilton-Wentworth population compared to 87% of the Region's poor population.

Municipal Poverty Rates

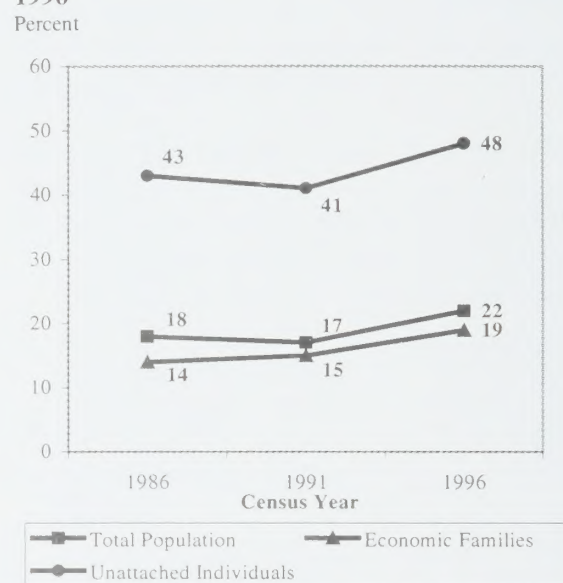
Poverty rates varied across the six Hamilton-Wentworth municipalities in 1996.

- 87,545 or 28% of Hamilton residents
- 6,800 or 13% of Stoney Creek residents
- 2,500 or 11% of Dundas residents
- 2,400 or 7% of Flamborough residents
- 780 or 7% of Glanbrook residents
- 1,165 or 5% of Ancaster residents

Poverty is Increasing

In Hamilton-Wentworth, poverty rates increased from 1986 to 1996 among the total population, economic families and unattached individuals (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percentage of Total Population, Economic Families and Unattached Individuals Living Below the Low-Income Cut-Off, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1986 – 1996



Source: Statistics Canada, 1986, 1991 & 1996 Census.

Poverty Rates Among Specific Groups

In 1996, poverty rates were higher for specific Hamilton-Wentworth sub-populations as compared to the overall Hamilton-Wentworth poverty rate (22%).

- Gender, Age & Marital Status -

- 25,400 or 27% of children aged 14 years or less
- 15,310 or 26% of youth aged 15 to 24 years
- 56,550 or 24% of females
- 7,465 or 32% of seniors aged 75 years and over
- 7,840 or 64% of single parent families with children under 18 years of age

- Ethnicity & Country of Origin -

- 7,690 or 50% of recent immigrants (arriving between 1990 and 1996)
- 16,915 or 41% of people of a visible minority
- 2,250 or 50% of Aboriginal people

- Education & Employment Status -



- 46,255 or 27% of people without a secondary school certificate
- 43,765 or 32% of people not in the labour force
- 8,570 or 41% of unemployed people

- Health Status -

- 21,015 or 35% of people with a reported activity limitation

Health Status of Hamilton-Wentworth Residents

Table 1. Number of People Living* with Self-Reported Physical or Mental Limitations, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1996/97

| Physical Limitations: | | Number* |
|--|---|---------|
|  | Pain and discomfort: People with pain and discomfort, which prevents at least a few, some or most activities. | 45,300 |
| | Sensory (vision, hearing or speaking): People unable to see well enough to read ordinary newsprint or recognize a friend from the other side of the street, even with glasses or contact lenses; or not able to be understood completely when speaking with strangers. | 17,800 |
| | Getting around: People not able to walk around the neighbourhood without difficulty and without mechanical support such as braces, canes or crutches. | 11,500 |
| | Hands and fingers: People who require the help of another person or from special equipment because of a limitation in the use of hands or fingers. | 1,800 |
| Mental Limitations: | | |
|  | Memory: People who are usually forgetful or unable to remember. | 67,200 |
| | Thinking: People who are unable to think or who have difficulty when trying to think or solve problems. | 29,200 |
| | Feelings: People who are 'somewhat unhappy' or 'unhappy'. | 14,800 |

*Estimates for people living at home in Hamilton-Wentworth aged 12 years and over in 1996/97 (n=406,400).

Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, 1996/97 Ontario Health Survey.

Figure 3. Percentage of People Aged 12 and Over with Self-Reported Depression and who Felt Depressed by Sex⁺, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1996/97



+Percent for depression among males too small to report. *Within past two weeks.

^0.9 probability for major depressive episode in past year.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, 1996/97 Ontario Health Survey.

Table 2. Number of Days Spent in Hospital by Discharge Diagnosis, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1997

| Discharge Diagnosis | Days in Hospital |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Cardiovascular Disease | 73,830 |
| Injury & Poisoning* | 37,267 |
| Cancer | 36,447 |
| Mental Disorders | 35,783 |
| Digestive System | 26,582 |
| Respiratory System | 20,959 |
| Muskuloskeletal System | 13,549 |
| Nervous System & Sense Organs | 7,359 |

*includes misadventures due to medical care and biological agents.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, Provincial Health Planning Database, 1999.

Table 3. Cancer, Cardiovascular and Respiratory Disease Mortality Rates^{*}, Hamilton-Wentworth and Canada, 1996

| | Hamilton-Wentworth's Rank [^] | Deaths per 100,000 Population | |
|------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--------|
| | | Hamilton-Wentworth | Canada |
| Cardiovascular Disease | 9 | 267.6 | 267.5 |
| Cancer | 7 | 202.5 | 199.6 |
| Respiratory Disease | 6 | 69.1 | 64.5 |

*Age and sex standardized mortality rates. ^Rank among 17 Canadian communities from highest to lowest mortality rate.

Source: The Maclean's Health Report, CIHI/Statistics Canada, 1999.

Health and Well-Being of Children and Youth in Hamilton-Wentworth

Children and youth (aged 19 years and younger) comprised 26% (n=122,700) of Hamilton-Wentworth's population in 1996. The early years of child development, especially ages zero to three, are critical in establishing a person's long-term learning and coping skills, behaviour and health status. Healthy child development requires a variety of supportive and nurturing community environments including *caring, opportunity, harmonious* and *learning communities*. What follows are four indicators or 'signals', each representing a type of community environment, which measure the health and well-being of our children and youth.

Opportunity Communities: School Attendance

Although people who leave high school without graduating do find work, they are more likely to be unemployed, have lower earnings and less likely to work full-time, year round compared to people who complete high school or post-secondary education.

The pattern of school attendance among youth aged 15 to 24 years in Hamilton-Wentworth is an indicator of educational attainment in our community. In Hamilton-Wentworth, the proportion of youth attending school on a full-time basis increased from 59% in 1991 to 61% in 1996. Conversely, the proportion of Hamilton-Wentworth youth not attending school decreased from 37% in 1991 to 33% in 1996. Similar trends were noted for Ontario during the same time period.

Learning Communities: Reading by Grade 3

Basic literacy is acquired primarily by Grade 3. Literacy is a skill considered fundamental for continued learning and future success and well-being. Between the 1997/98 and 1998/99 school years, the proportion of provincially tested Grade 3 students who performed within or above the expected reading level remained constant for Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic schools (49%) and decreased for both Hamilton-Wentworth public schools (from 46% to 42%) and Ontario schools overall (from 46% to 44%).

Factors which may influence a school board's reading scores include the number of English as a second language (ESL) students served. For example, 6% of Hamilton-Wentworth public school students are ESL students compared to 2% of Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic school students.

Harmonious Communities: Protective Care

Children are brought under protective care if they have suffered or are at risk of suffering physical, sexual or emotional harm. The number of children brought under protective care by the local children's aid societies increased from 501 in 1996, to 556 in 1997 and 704 in 1998. Heightened awareness and sensitivity to child protection issues within our community could be contributing to this increase.

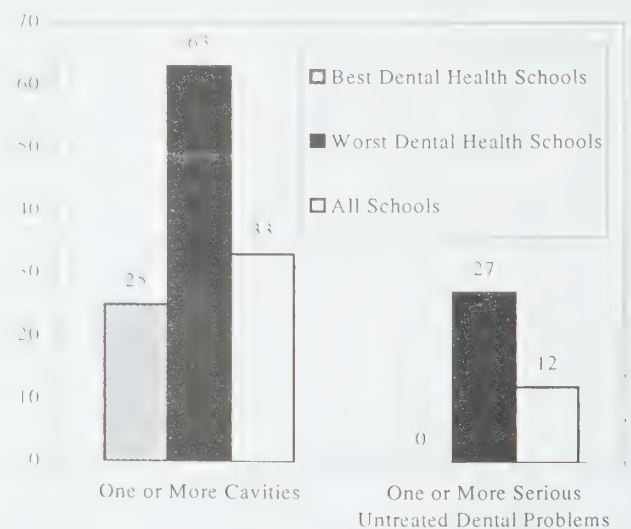
Caring Communities: Dental Health

A 1998/99 survey conducted in Hamilton-Wentworth primary schools found that among screened children:

- 67% had never had a cavity and those with cavities had, on average, four decayed teeth.
- 43% could have used a visit to the dentist.
- 12% had serious untreated dental problems.

Dental health varies across schools. Schools with the best dental health had a much lower proportion of children with cavities than schools with the poorest dental health (25% compared to 63%). This trend was also true for serious untreated dental problems (Figure 4). Many of the schools with poor dental health were located in lower income areas. Lower income families may experience more barriers to attaining good dental health than middle and high

Figure 4. Percentage of Screened Primary School Children with One or More Cavities and One or More Serious Untreated Dental Problems by School Dental Health Status, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1998/99
Percent of screened school children



Source: Hamilton-Wentworth Social & Public Health Services Division, 1998/99 Dental Indices Survey.

Air, Water and Food Quality in Hamilton-Wentworth

Air Quality

Recent research shows that air pollution, or smog, leads to premature death in the Hamilton area. The main sources of air pollution and smog are automobile and truck traffic and industry emissions.

It is estimated that every year there are:

- 90 premature deaths, and
 - 300 hospital admissions
- in Hamilton-Wentworth linked to air pollution. Childhood bronchitis, asthma symptoms, restricted activity and hospital emergency room visits are also linked to pollution.



- In 1996, Hamilton recorded 559 hours of poor air quality. This was lower than the number of poor air quality

days recorded for other areas including Windsor, London, Sarnia and Burlington.

Air pollution contains very small particles of solid and liquid matter called PM10 (particulate matter less than 10 micrometers in diameter), also known as inhaleable particulates. These tiny particles can be breathed into our lungs and affect our health, especially among people with existing heart and lung disorders.

- In 1996, the Hamilton area experienced more days with PM10 levels above the provincial guidelines compared to all other cities in Ontario. However, between 1991 and 1997, PM10 levels decreased by 20% at three of Hamilton's four air quality monitoring stations.



The Hamilton Air Quality Initiative (HAQI) Committee, which includes local citizens, researchers and representatives from all three levels of government was formed to develop strategies to reduce the pollution in our air.

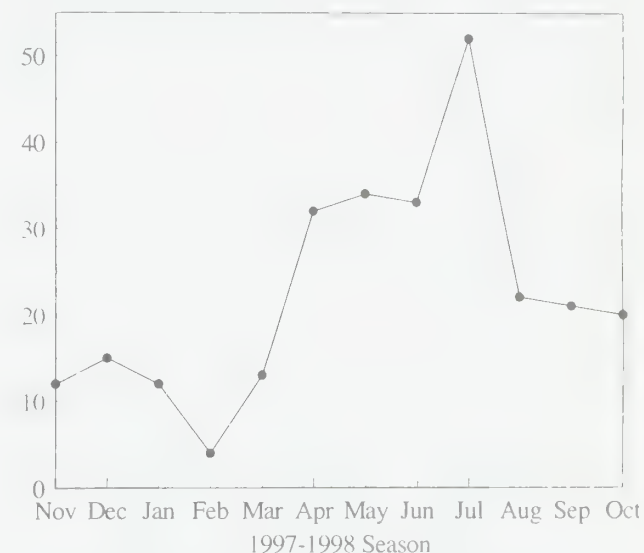
Food Quality

In Hamilton-Wentworth, reports of enteric, or gastrointestinal disease, totalled 437 in 1998 compared to 485 in 1997.

Enteric illness is often unreported because the symptoms resemble common stomach and bowel problems. *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella* and *Escherichia coli* 0157:H7 are three enteric diseases that are spread by food or people. Higher rates of these illnesses are found in the summer due to factors such as poor refrigeration and cooking of barbeque or picnic foods (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Number of Confirmed Cases of Enteric Illness* by Month, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1997/98 Season
Number of confirmed cases



*Campylobacter, Salmonella and E. coli only.

Source: Hamilton-Wentworth Social & Public Health Services Division, Reportable Disease Information System, 1999.

Water Quality

In Hamilton-Wentworth there are approximately 14,000 wells. Almost one out of 10 people rely on these wells for their drinking water. A 1999 study revealed that approximately 30% of the wells in Ancaster, Flamborough and Glanbrook failed to meet the Ontario Drinking Water Objectives for bacteria and/or nitrate content.

Tobacco and Alcohol Use in Hamilton-Wentworth

Abuse of substances such as tobacco and alcohol are behaviours associated with increased risk of illness, disease, disability and injury.

Tobacco Use

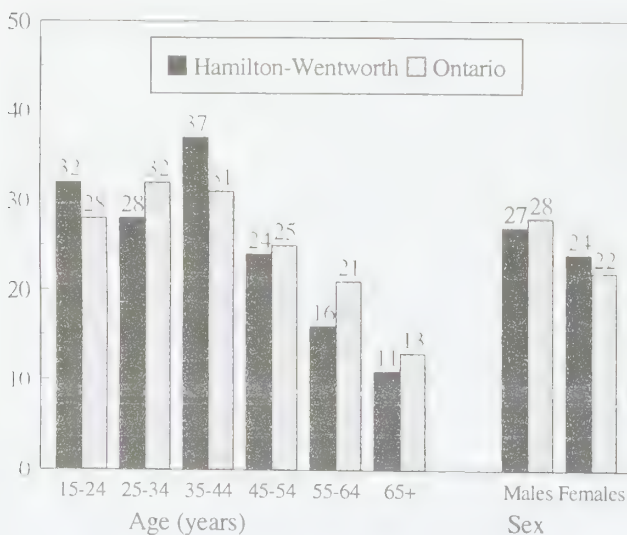
In 1996/97, 25% of Hamilton-Wentworth people aged 12 years and over reported being daily or occasional cigarette smokers (27% of males; 24% of females). Similar rates were reported for Ontario (25% overall; 28% of males; 22% of females) in 1996/97 (Figure 6).

Smoking rates differ by age in Hamilton-Wentworth and Ontario. For example, smoking rates were highest among people aged 35 to 44 years in Hamilton-Wentworth (37%) in 1996/97 (Figure 6).

In Hamilton-Wentworth, 32% of youth aged 15 to 24 years reported being daily or occasional smokers compared to 28% in Ontario in 1996/97 (Figure 6). This is a concern because research shows that youth smokers often continue to smoke as adults.

Figure 6. Percentage of People Aged 15 Years and Over who Reported Being Current Daily or Occasional Smokers by Age Group and Sex, Hamilton-Wentworth and Ontario, 1996/97

Percent



Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, 1996/97 Ontario Health Survey.

Second-hand Smoke

Second-hand smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, at least 40 of which are known to cause human cancers. Non-smokers are placed at health risk through their exposure to second-hand smoke from exhaled smoke and smoke from the burning end of cigarettes. Each year, in Hamilton-Wentworth an estimated 50 non-smokers die from diseases related to second-hand smoke.

In Hamilton-Wentworth, 33% of people aged 12 years and over indicated that at least one household member smoked regularly inside the house in 1996/97. In Hamilton-Wentworth in 1995:

- 82% of adults reported being concerned about exposure to second-hand smoke, and
- 71% strongly or somewhat supported regulations to make all enclosed public places smoke-free.

Alcohol Use

In Hamilton-Wentworth in 1996/97:

- 77% (or 303,300) of people aged 15 years and over were 'past year drinkers' (had at least one drink in the past year).
- Among these past year drinkers, the average number of drinks consumed per week was 3.4 (same as Ontario average).
- This average number of drinks consumed per week is well within the recommended low-risk drinking guidelines (14 or fewer drinks per week for males, and 9 or fewer drinks per week for females).
- However, 6% (or 19,300) of past year drinkers in Hamilton-Wentworth reported weekly alcohol consumption in excess of the guidelines in 1996/97 (same as for Ontario overall).
- In both Hamilton-Wentworth and Ontario overall, 6% of past year drinkers reported heavy, or binge, drinking (five or more drinks on one occasion) at least once in the past week. Thus, an estimated 17,000 people in Hamilton-Wentworth were at risk for alcohol-related injuries and other health and social problems in 1996/97.

Healthy Weight, Physical Activity and Healthy Eating in Hamilton-Wentworth

Participating in regular physical activity, eating properly and obtaining a healthy weight can help prevent heart disease, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis and obesity. People who participate in regular physical activity tend to have lower health care and sick leave costs over their life time.

Healthy Weight

The body mass index (BMI) is the most common method of determining if an individual's weight is in a healthy range. In general, people aged 20 to 64 years of age, excluding pregnant females, who have a BMI level between 20 and 25 are considered to be at a 'healthy weight'.

In Hamilton-Wentworth, 39% of people aged 20 to 64 years were at a healthy weight compared to 40% in Central West Ontario and 42% in Ontario overall in 1996/97. More females were at a healthy weight than males (45% compared to 33%) in Hamilton-Wentworth.

Over one quarter (28%) of Hamilton-Wentworth people aged 20 to 64 years were at 'health risk' because of their high body weight (BMI>27) (28% in Central West Ontario and 27% in Ontario overall) in 1996/97. Almost twice as many males (36%) in Hamilton-Wentworth were overweight compared to females (19%).

Cost of 1999 Nutritious Food Basket

A 'nutritious food basket' estimates the average cost to purchase a list of foods which meet current nutrition recommendations for individuals or families (see Table 4). The cost of a nutritious food basket is important to know when assessing the adequacy of social assistance and minimum wage incomes.

Table 4. Average Weekly Cost of a Nutritious Food Basket for Specific Individuals and Families, Hamilton-Wentworth 1999

| Type of Individual / Family | Average Cost per Week |
|---|-----------------------|
| Single male (19-24 years) | \$37.86 |
| Single mother (25-49 years) with 7-year old daughter | \$47.86 |
| A family of 4 individuals (male and female each 25-49 years; boy 13-14 years; girl 7-9 years) | \$105.37 |
| Single female (75 years or older) | \$22.50 |

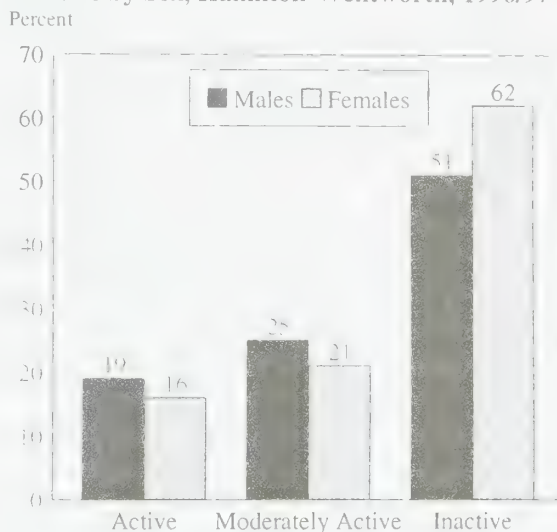
Source: Hamilton-Wentworth Social & Public Health Services Division, 1999.

Physical Activity

Research indicates that an 'active' level of physical activity (for example, 60 minutes of accumulated exercise per day) is required to stay healthy or improve one's health. In Hamilton-Wentworth, 19% of males and 16% of females aged 20 years and over reported being active in 1996/97 (Figure 7).

Moderate physical activity is the minimum level of activity recommended for maintenance of a healthy weight. Brisk walking for 30 to 40 minutes on most days of the week is an example of a moderate level of physical activity. In Hamilton-Wentworth, 25% of males and 21% of females aged 20 years and over reported a moderate level of physical activity, while 51% of males and 62% of females aged 20 years and over reported being inactive in 1996/97 (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Percentage of People Aged 20 Years and Over who Reported Being Active, Moderately Active or Inactive by Sex, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1996/97



Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, 1996/97 Ontario Health Survey.

Physical activity levels differ by age. In 1996/97, 43% of people aged 12 to 19 years reported being active compared to 18% of people aged 20 and over in Hamilton-Wentworth. Data on the physical activity levels of young males versus females aged 12 to 19 years are not available. However, in this age range, males tend to be more active than females.

Sexual Health in Hamilton-Wentworth

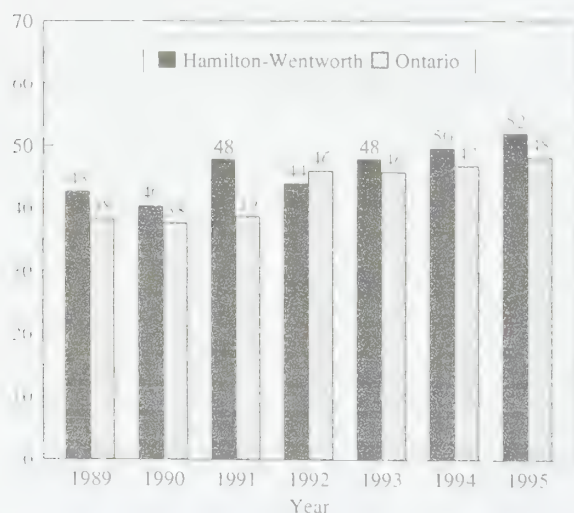
Teen Pregnancy

Teen pregnancy is associated with socio-cultural factors such as poverty and unemployment, family factors such as a family history of teenage parenting, and intrapersonal factors such as low self-esteem, depression, substance use, history of sexual abuse and low interest in school. Teen mothers and their infants are at increased risk of poor health outcomes such as toxemia, premature birth and low birth weight.

The 1976 introduction of Ontario sexual health programs saw the Hamilton-Wentworth teen pregnancy rate decrease by 30% from 62 pregnancies per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19 years in 1976 to 43 per 1,000 in 1989. However, from 1989 to 1995 the rate has increased in Hamilton-Wentworth and Ontario (Figure 8). This rising trend, seen throughout Canada, parallels the country's rising poverty rates.

Figure 8. Pregnancy Rate per 1,000 Females Aged 15 to 19 Years, Hamilton-Wentworth and Ontario, 1989-1995*

Pregnancy rate per 1,000 females aged 15-19 years



*Most recent data available. Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, HELPS, 1999.

In 1995, there were 741 teen (aged 15 to 19 years) pregnancies resulting in 373 babies in Hamilton-Wentworth (the remaining pregnancies resulted in abortions or still births). Of these babies, 61% were born to single teens, 11% to married teens and the remaining 28% were born to teens of unknown marital status.

- The Hamilton-Wentworth teen fertility rate (number of live births per 1,000 teen females) increased from 24 per 1,000 in 1989 to 26 per 1,000 in 1995.
- In 1995, of those Hamilton-Wentworth teens who gave birth, 15% (58) were having at least their second baby compared to 19% (72) in 1994.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases – All Ages

Reduction of the following sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) could be achieved through safer sex practices.

- Chlamydia -

Chlamydia accounted for 81% (624) of newly reported STDs in Hamilton-Wentworth in 1998. There were 35 more cases reported in 1998 than in 1997 (a 6% increase).

- The 1998 incidence of chlamydia was higher in Hamilton-Wentworth than Ontario overall (127 cases per 100,000 population compared to 106 per 100,000 population). The Hamilton-Wentworth rates may be higher because local physicians are more likely to test for and report chlamydia.
- Females had 77% of all chlamydia infections reported in Hamilton-Wentworth in 1998. Of these cases, 78% were to females aged 16 to 25 years (1,200 cases per 100,000). This was above the Ontario public health target rate for the year 2005 of 500 cases per 100,000 females aged 15 to 24 years. Reported cases of chlamydia may be higher among females than males because females are more likely to show signs and symptoms, and to be tested.

- Gonorrhea -

The incidence of gonorrhea declined in Hamilton-Wentworth from 51 per 100,000 population in 1990 to 25 per 100,000 in 1998.

- HIV -

There were 12 new HIV infections reported in Hamilton-Wentworth in 1998 (compared to 23 in 1997). Of these 12 new cases, 10 were male and two were female. Most reported cases were for people aged 20 to 35 years. The most common reported risk factors for contracting HIV in Hamilton-Wentworth include for males, having sex with a male partner, and for females, having sex with an HIV positive male partner.

Heart Disease in Hamilton-Wentworth



Cardiovascular disease (CVD) refers to diseases of the circulatory system including heart disease and stroke. Heart attack and chest tightness (angina) are the main forms of heart disease. Cardiovascular disease is the number one killer of both males and females in Hamilton-Wentworth and Central West Ontario.

Deaths

- Each year approximately 1,500 Hamilton-Wentworth people die from CVD.
- In 1996, CVD was the leading cause of death accounting for 1,422 or 36% of all deaths in Hamilton-Wentworth (compared to 40% in Central West Ontario).
- Of these deaths, 60% (848) were due to heart disease, 20% (282) were due to stroke, and the remaining 20% (287) were due to other diseases of the heart and blood vessels.

Death rates from CVD vary with age and sex. In Hamilton-Wentworth:

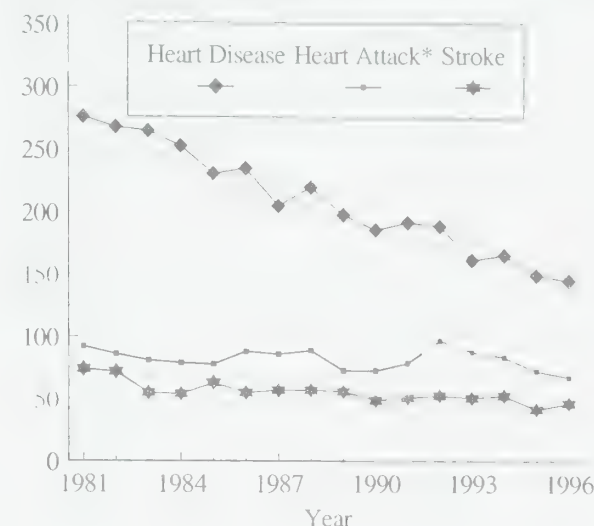
- 87% of deaths due to CVD in 1996 occurred among people aged 65 years and over.
- Two to three times more males aged 35 to 64 years died from CVD as compared to females aged 35 to 64 years in 1996. After age 65, CVD death rates among males and females became more similar.

In Hamilton-Wentworth, between 1981 and 1996, death rates for heart disease and stroke declined (Figure 9), as they did across Canada.



Changes such as reduction in smoking, better treatment of high blood pressure and decreased exposure to second-hand smoke have contributed to the declining death rates.

Figure 9. Age-Standardized⁺ Mortality Rates for Heart Disease and Stroke, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1981-1996
Mortality rate per 100,000 population



*Mortality rates were age-standardized to the 1991 Ontario population.

*Heart attack is a subcategory of heart disease.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, Mortality Database [HELPS], 1999.

Potential Years of Life Lost

Potential years of life lost (PYLL) is a measure of premature death calculated by adding all of the years of life lost for people who died before the age of 75 years.

- In 1996, CVD was the second leading cause of PYLL in Hamilton-Wentworth accounting for 21% of all PYLL (21% in Central West Ontario).
- PYLL due to CVD was much greater for males than females because males died at an earlier age from CVD as compared to females.

Hospital Utilization

In 1997, CVD was the largest contributor to hospital separations in Hamilton-Wentworth accounting for 16% of all separations (compared to 15% in Central West Ontario). Hospital separations are defined as discharge from hospital due to death, return to home, transfer to another facility, or patients signing themselves out.

CVD accounted for 20% of all days spent in hospital by Hamilton-Wentworth people compared to 19% for Central West Ontario.

Cancer in Hamilton-Wentworth

Cancer represents a group of diseases caused by unregulated and uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in various body sites. Modifiable risk factors associated with cancer include tobacco use and exposure to second-hand smoke, high fat diets, excessive alcohol consumption, physical inactivity and occupational/environmental exposure to cancer-causing agents.

Deaths

Cancer was the leading cause of premature death among males and females in Hamilton-Wentworth, and the second leading cause of death after cardiovascular disease in 1996.

- In 1996, cancer was responsible for 1,100 deaths or 28% of all deaths in Hamilton-Wentworth (28% in Central West Ontario).

Together, lung, colorectal, breast and prostate cancer accounted for 48% of all cancer deaths in Hamilton-Wentworth in 1996. Although more males die from cancer every year, female specific cancers tend to occur earlier in life.

- Cancer death rates increase with age. Of all cancer deaths from 1986 to 1996 in Hamilton-Wentworth, approximately 70% occurred among those 65 years of age and over.

Lung cancer was the leading cause of cancer death among males in Hamilton-Wentworth in 1996. Among females, lung cancer recently joined breast cancer as the leading cause of cancer death in Hamilton-Wentworth in 1996.



Cancer also affects children and young adults. In Hamilton-Wentworth, cancer was the second leading cause of death after injuries in children aged one to 14 years in 1996.

Potential Years of Life Lost

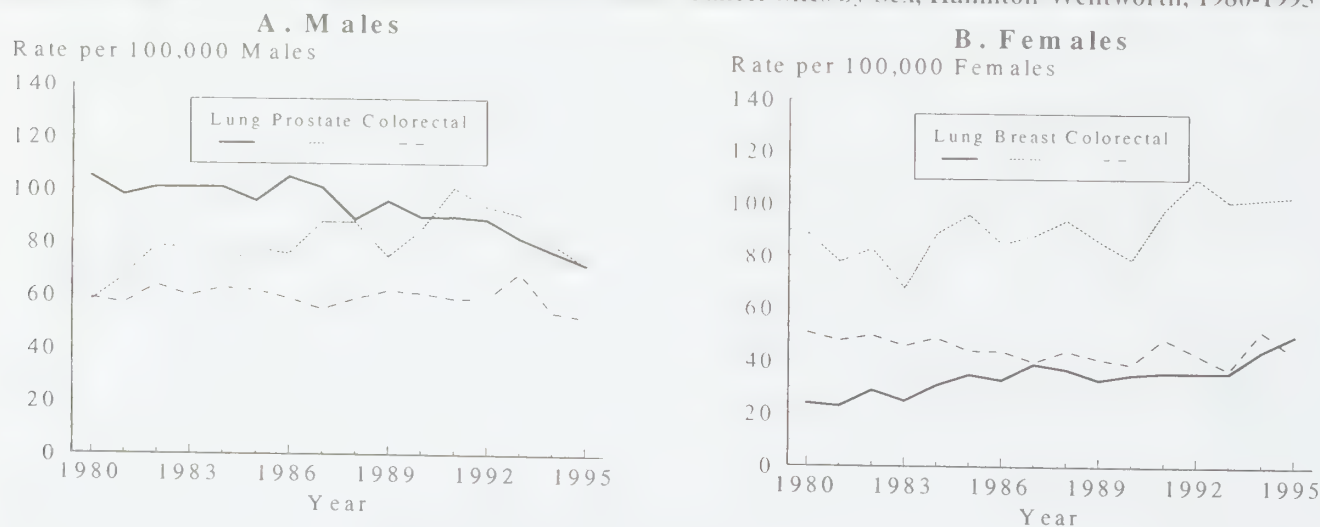
Potential years of life lost (PYLL) is a measure of premature death calculated by adding all of the years of life lost for people who died before the age of 75 years. In 1996, cancer was responsible for 33% of all PYLL in Hamilton-Wentworth (33% in Central West Ontario).

Incidence

In Hamilton-Wentworth in 1995, prostate cancer was the most common cancer in males followed very closely by lung cancer, then colorectal cancer (Figure 10A). Recently, the incidence and death rates of lung cancer in males have declined. This trend is due likely to decreased tobacco use among males over the past 30 years.

In Hamilton-Wentworth in 1995, breast cancer was the most common cancer in females followed by lung and colorectal cancer (Figure 10B). The increase in lung cancer incidence and death rates in females corresponds to increased tobacco use among females in the 1960s and 1970s compared to previous decades.

Figure 10. Age-Standardized* Incidence Rates for Selected Cancer Sites by Sex, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1980-1995*



*Age-standardized to the 1991 Ontario population. *Most recent data available.
Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, Ontario Cancer Incidence Database [HELPS], 1999.

Injuries in Hamilton-Wentworth

Deaths

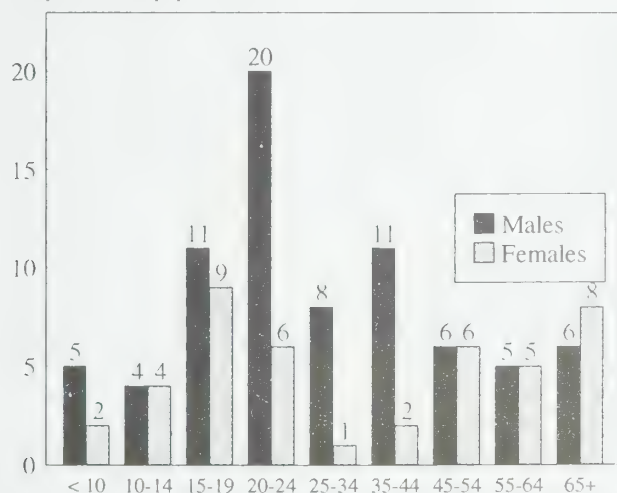
In Hamilton-Wentworth, injury was the leading cause of death in children and youth and the fourth leading cause of death for people of all ages in 1996.

In 1996, injury deaths (204) were most often caused by falls (32%), suicide (21%) and motor vehicle collisions (12%) in Hamilton-Wentworth. In Hamilton-Wentworth, motor vehicle collisions were a major cause of injury-related deaths among males aged 20 to 24 years (Figure 11). Deaths due to falls occurred more frequently in people aged 65 years and over and suicides more frequently among people aged 35 to 64 years in 1996.

Between 1989 and 1996 in Hamilton-Wentworth, the percentage of injury-related deaths due to motor vehicle collisions decreased from 23% to 12%, as did the percentage due to suicides (23% to 21%), while the percentage due to falls increased (21% to 32%).

Figure 11. Age and Sex Specific Mortality Rates Due to Motor Vehicle Collisions by Age Group and Sex, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1994 – 1996

Rate per 100,000 population



Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, Mortality Database [HELPS], 1999.

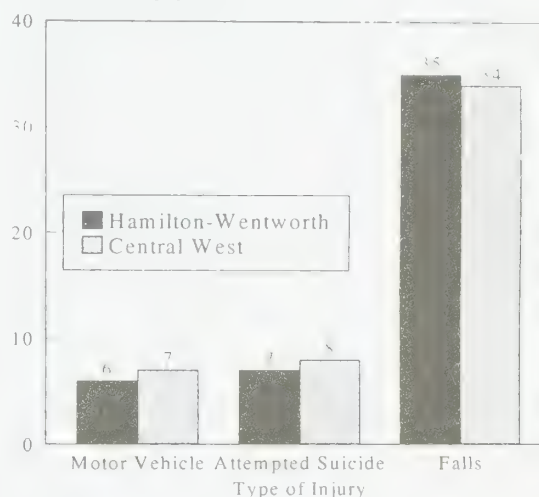
The evidence on teen suicide prevention is mixed indicating both beneficial and harmful effects for some participants. Thus, there is insufficient evidence to support the implementation of school-based curriculum suicide prevention programs for teens.

Hospital Utilization

In Hamilton-Wentworth in 1997, 3,508 hospital separations and 50,732 days spent in hospital were due to injury-related causes (non-health care related). Among Hamilton-Wentworth and Central West Ontario people of all ages, falls were the most common cause of injury-related hospitalization in 1997 followed by attempted suicide and motor vehicle collisions (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Rate of Hospital Separations Due to Motor Vehicle Collisions, Suicide Attempts and Falls, Hamilton-Wentworth and Central West Ontario, 1997

Rate per 100,000 population



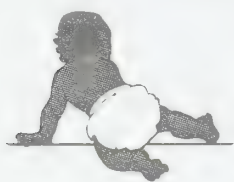
Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, Provincial Health Planning Database, 1999.

- Seniors had the highest rates of hospitalization (and death) due to injury compared to other age groups in Hamilton-Wentworth and Central West Ontario in 1997.
- Among people aged 14 years or less and 25 years and over, falls were the most frequent reason for hospitalization due to injury in Hamilton-Wentworth in 1997.
- Among people aged 15 to 24 years, attempted suicide was the most frequent cause of injury-related hospitalization in Hamilton-Wentworth in 1997.

Between 1989 and 1997 in Hamilton-Wentworth, there was a decrease in the percentage of injury-related hospital separations due to motor vehicle collisions (8% to 4%), attempted suicides (6% to 4%), and falls (25% to 22%).

Reproductive Outcomes in Hamilton-Wentworth

Low Birth Weight Babies



Babies who have a low birth weight (less than 2,500 grams) are often at increased risk of illness, disability and death. Maternal socio-economic factors such as

poverty and low education levels, and maternal lifestyle factors such as diet, smoking and substance use during pregnancy are associated with low birth weight.

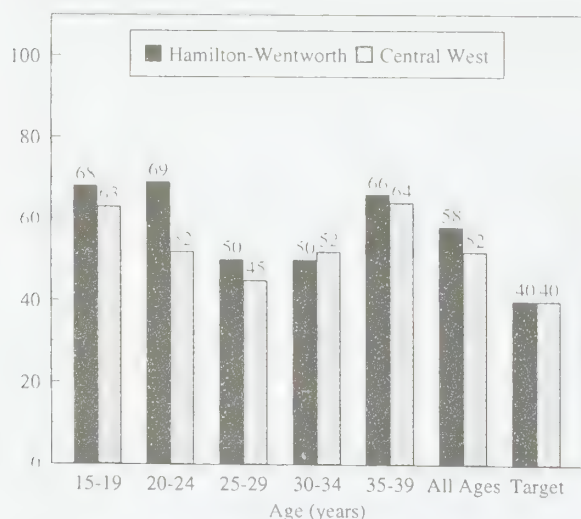
Research has shown that low birth weight and premature birth (born prior to 37 weeks gestation) represent approximately three-quarters of deaths within the first 28 days of a baby's life. Neonatal intensive care costs are \$1,500 or more per day.

Reducing the low birth weight baby rate to 40 per 1,000 live births is an Ontario public health target for the year 2010.

In 1996, the low birth weight baby rate was higher in Hamilton-Wentworth than in Central West Ontario (see Figure 13). This was also the case for 1991 to 1995.

Figure 13. Rate of Low Birth Weight Babies (less than 2,500 grams) per 1,000 Live Births by Age of Mother, Hamilton-Wentworth and Central West Ontario, 1996

Low birth weight baby rate
Per 1,000 live births



Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, Live Births Database [HELPS], 1999.

Females aged 20 to 24 years, 15 to 19 years and 35 to 39 years had the highest rates of low birth weight babies in Hamilton-Wentworth in 1996 (see Figure 13). These rates are for all live births including multiple and preterm births, which are more likely to result in low birth weight babies.

In Hamilton-Wentworth, the low birth weight baby rate for teens aged 13 to 16 years (95 per 1,000 live births) was higher than for teens aged 17 to 19 years (64 per 1,000) in 1996.

Similarly, in Central West Ontario in 1996, the low birth weight baby rate for teens aged 13 to 16 years was 92 per 1,000 live births and 58 per 1,000 live births for teens aged 17 to 19 years.

In 1996, single pregnant females gave birth to low birth weight babies at a higher rate than married pregnant females in Hamilton-Wentworth (68 per 1,000 compared to 55 per 1,000) and in Central West Ontario (63 per 1,000 compared to 47 per 1,000). Similar findings were seen in 1995.

Prenatal Classes

Prenatal class participants can improve an expectant mother's lifestyle choices and communication with her partner or health care providers. In 1998, 996 expectant mothers (many of whom attended with their partners) were registered in prenatal classes offered by the Hamilton-Wentworth Social and Public Health Services Division.

Neural Tube Defects

Folic acid supplements before and during pregnancy can cut the risk of spina bifida and other neural tube defects by half.

In Hamilton-Wentworth, there were two reported cases of neural tube defects in 1996 (3 per 10,000 births), and seven cases (11 per 10,000 births) in 1994 compared to Central West Region rates (12 cases per 10,000 births in 1996, and 8 per 10,000 births in 1994). In 1997, there were 11 hospital separations due to neural tube defects among newborns in Hamilton-Wentworth compared to seven in 1996. Decreasing the prevalence of neural tube defects by 25% by the year 2010 is an Ontario public health target.

Infectious Diseases in Hamilton-Wentworth

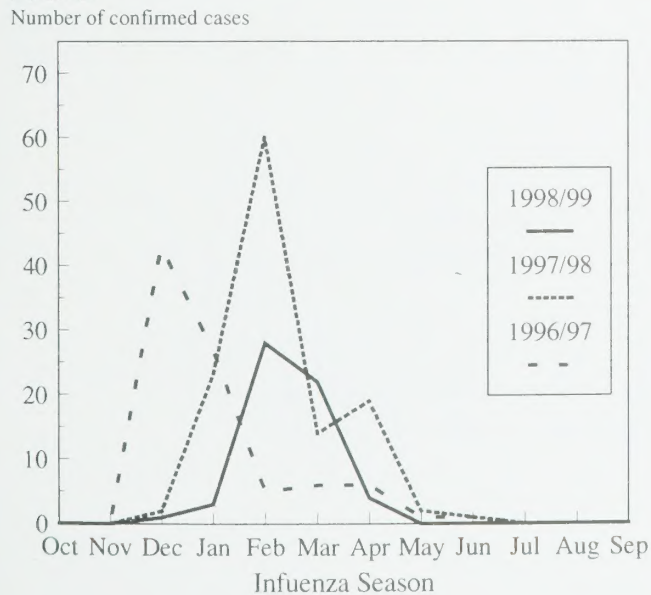
In Ontario, the Health Promotion and Protection Act identifies over 60 infectious diseases that must be reported to the local public health unit. Upon notification, the Hamilton-Wentworth Social and Public Health Services Division often contacts the patient for further information and takes action to prevent further spread of the disease. All information is kept confidential.

- In Hamilton-Wentworth, 2,147 confirmed cases of reportable infectious disease were reported in 1998, down 3% from the 2,210 cases in 1997.

Influenza

Influenza is a contagious disease that can cause pneumonia and sometimes death among the elderly and those with heart and lung problems. The influenza season begins usually in the fall and lasts into the spring. In Hamilton-Wentworth, the 1998/99 influenza season started later than the 1997/98 and 1996/97 seasons (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Number of Confirmed Influenza Cases by Month, Hamilton-Wentworth, 1996/97 - 1998/99 Seasons



Source: Hamilton-Wentworth Social & Public Health Services Division, Reportable Disease Information System, 1999.

Infection Control in Institutions

- Influenza -

In Hamilton-Wentworth four out of 18 long-term care facilities had winter influenza outbreaks during the 1998/99 season compared to 16 of 18 in 1997/98. In 1997/98, the flu virus was slightly different than anticipated, resulting in only partial protection by the vaccine.

- Multi-Drug Resistant Organisms -

Since bugs can develop resistance to antibiotics, we need to ensure appropriate antibiotic use as a community. Multi-drug resistant organisms such as *Methacillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus* (MRSA) are challenging to control.

- In 1998, 831 new cases of MRSA were identified in Hamilton-Wentworth hospitals.
- From January to June 1999, 378 new cases of MRSA were reported.

Tuberculosis Control

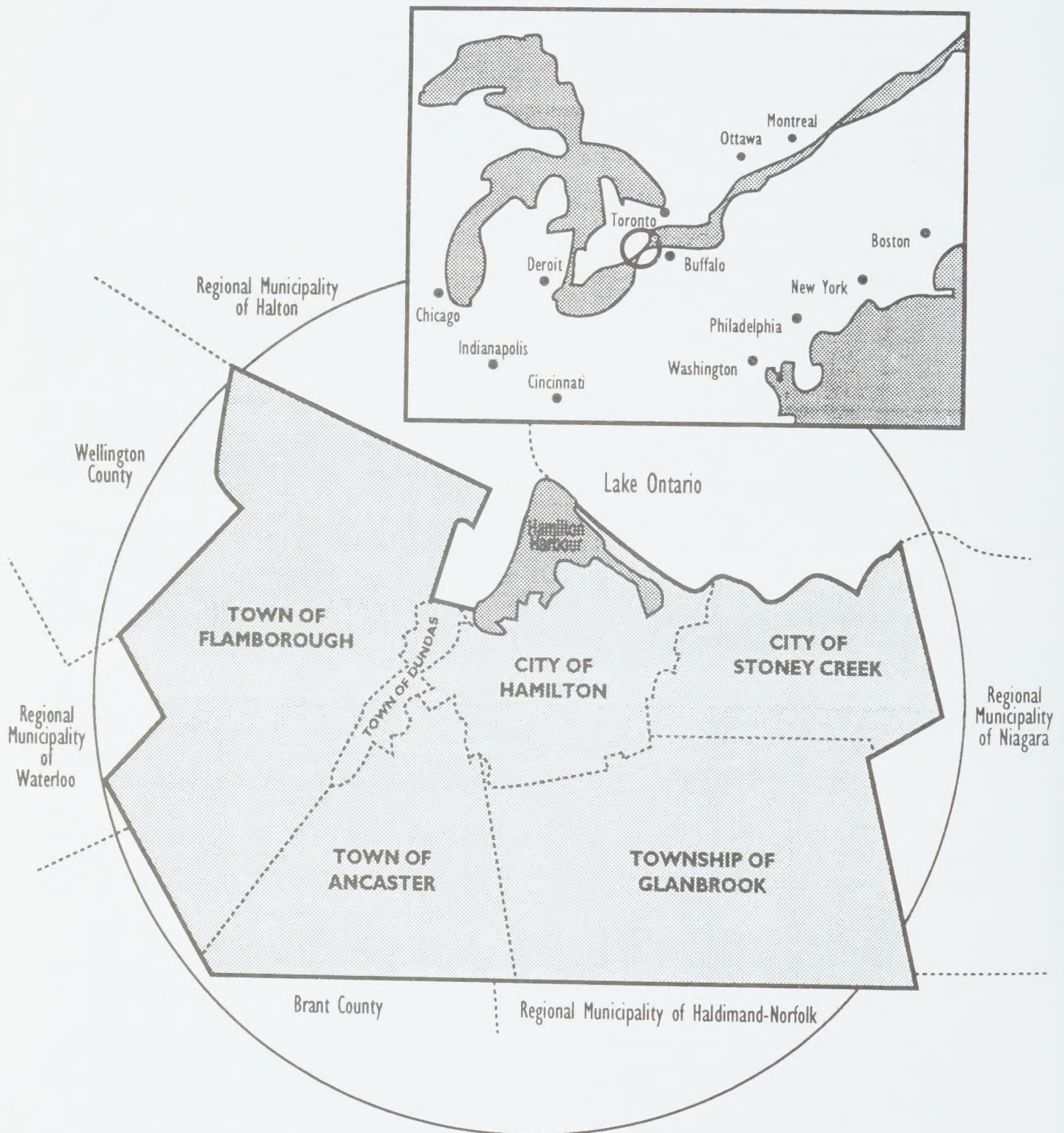
In 1998, 27 new and reactivated cases of TB were confirmed in Hamilton-Wentworth (5 cases per 100,000 population). In 1997, 23 new and reactivated TB cases were reported.

Vaccine Preventable Diseases

Pertussis, or whooping cough, can be a serious disease among very young children, and can lead to pneumonia, brain damage and even death.

- In 1998, there were 15 confirmed cases of pertussis, or 3 per 100,000 population in Hamilton-Wentworth compared to 16 per 100,000 in Ontario overall.
- In 1997, there were 18 pertussis cases (4 per 100,000 population) in Hamilton-Wentworth.
- Control of diphtheria, polio, rubella, tetanus and measles was successful in 1997 and 1998, with no confirmed cases during this time period.
- The Hepatitis B immunization program resulted in 86% of Grade 7 students receiving a full course of Hepatitis B vaccine during the 1998/99 school year.

Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth



Source: The Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth, 1992 Annual Financial Report.

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